

REMARKS

Applicants have now had an opportunity to carefully consider the Examiner's comments set forth in the Office Action of August 31, 2006.

Reconsideration of the Application is requested.

The Applicants thank the Examiner for clarification of the Office Action in telephone discussions on September 12, 2006. If Applicants have misunderstood the Examiner's position, which is outlined below, the Examiner is requested to issue a further Office Action correcting the errors.

The Examiner declined to grant Applicants an interview after final rejection under MPEP 713.09.

The Office Action

Claims 1-16 remain in this application. Claim 16 stands withdrawn.

Claims 1-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by US 2003/0002447 to Jackson (now issued Patent No. 7,043,309), herein after Jackson '447.

Claims 1, 3, 5, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Jackson, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,634,636), hereinafter Jackson '636, in view of Judge (U.S. Patent No. 4,618,292).

Claims 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Stephan (U.S. Patent No. 5,687,964) in view of Jackson '636.

For the reasons outlined below it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance.

Claim 16, which was made dependent on claim 1 in the prior response, is still considered to be withdrawn. Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of claim 16.

Applicants submit herewith a declaration under 37 C.F.R. §1.132 of Warren B. Jackson which states that he invented the subject matter disclosed in the 2003/0002447 publication and which is relied on in the Examiner's rejection. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that Jackson '447 be removed as a reference.

Although the Examiner has rejected all claims over Jackson '447, it is submitted that at least some of the claims are improperly rejected over Jackson. For example Claim 8 requires a plurality of printers and a plurality of sheet processing systems. The Examiner

points to paragraph [0042] of Jackson '447 as disclosing these elements. However, applicants fail to see reference to plural printers and sheet processing systems in paragraph [0042] or elsewhere.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 6. Claim 6 was rejected solely on the basis of Jackson '447. Since Jackson '447 is not properly a reference, it is submitted that claim 1, and claims 3, 5, 7, and 16 dependent therefrom are in condition for allowance.

Claim 8 recites a system including a multifunction printed sheets interface system which includes a sheet position sensing system and a sheet transporting system. The sheet transporting system provides selectable sheet translation to selectably transport sheets from selected ones of plural sheet input areas to selected ones of plural sheet outputs areas so as to provide selectable sheet feeding from selected printers to selected sheet processing systems. First and second of the sheet input areas are positioned relative to first and second of the sheet outputs areas such that a path of a sheet transported between the first input area and the first outputs area crosses a path of a sheet transported between the second input area and the second outputs area.

Claim 8 stand rejected over Jackson '447. For the reasons outlined above, Jackson '447 should be removed as a reference.

The Stephan and Jackson '636 references do not disclose or fairly suggest such a system. In Stephan, the sheets are dragged along the travel path by gripper systems which engage the leading edge of the sheet (see col. 5, lines 33-36). The air blowing nozzles 48 of Stephan are merely used to stop the sheets fluttering and avoid contact with the guide surface members 32 (see col. 6, lines 49-54). This avoids smearing of the sheets (col. 7, line 9). Thus, Stephan fails to disclose a sheet transporting system which provides selectable sheet translation to selectably transport sheets from selected ones of plural sheet input areas to selected ones of plural sheet outputs areas so as to provide selectable sheet feeding from selected printers to selected sheet processing systems. Rather, Stephan's system simply uses the gripper system to convey the sheets in the direction of arrow 34 (FIG. 2, col. 6, line 44).

The conveyor system disclosed by Jackson '636 includes an upper section and a lower section which are substantially coextensive (col. 3, lines 25-26). A flexible object (a

sheet of paper) is moved along the conveyor system in one direction by air jets 26. The air jets allow correction of minor misalignments in paper position and orientation so as to make sure that the paper is maintained on the same desired path to the same destination. Any minor change from the desired path can result in distortion of an image. Jackson seeks simply to maintain movement of the sheet in the downstream direction, thus correcting for any minor rotation or orientation of the sheet. Thus, Jackson teaches away from directing paper sheets in two directions contemporaneously towards different output destinations.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 8, and claims 2, 4, 6, and 9-13 dependent therefrom, distinguish over the references of record.

Claim 14 recites a method which includes printing sheets on a plurality of printers, feeding the printed sheets from the plurality of printers to a plurality of spaced respective input areas of a printed sheets interface system, transporting the printed sheets from the input areas to selected ones of a plurality of spaced output areas of the printed sheets interface system with a plurality of sheet transports whereby a sheet transported between a first of the input areas and a first of the outputs areas crosses a path of a sheet transported between a second of the input areas and a second of the outputs areas, and sensing a position of the printed sheets during transporting.

Claim 14 stand rejected over Jackson '447. For the reasons outlined above, Jackson '447 should be removed as a reference.

The Stephan and Jackson '636 references do not disclose or fairly suggest a method as claimed. In Stephan, the sheets are dragged along the travel path by gripper systems which engage the leading edge of the sheet (see col. 5, lines 33-36). Thus, Stephan fails to disclose transporting printed sheets whereby a sheet transported between a first of the input areas and a first of the outputs areas crosses a path of a sheet transported between a second of the input areas and a second of the outputs areas. The conveyor system disclosed by Jackson '636 includes an upper section and a lower section which are substantially coextensive (col. 3, lines 25-26). A flexible object (a sheet of paper) is moved along the conveyor system in one direction by air jets 26. The air jets allow correction of minor misalignments in paper position and orientation so as to make sure that the paper is maintained on the same desired path to the same destination. Any minor change from the desired path can result in distortion of an image. Jackson seeks

simply to maintain movement of the sheet in the downstream direction, thus correcting for any minor rotation or orientation of the sheet. Thus, Jackson teaches away from directing paper sheets in two directions contemporaneously towards different output destinations.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 14 and claim 15 dependent therefrom distinguish over the references of record.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons detailed above, it is submitted all claims remaining in the application (Claims 1-16) are now in condition for allowance. The foregoing comments do not require unnecessary additional search or examination.

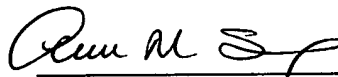
No additional fee is believed to be required for this Amendment F. However, the undersigned attorney of record hereby authorizes the charging of any necessary fees, other than the issue fee, to Xerox Deposit Account No. 24-0037.

In the event the Examiner considers personal contact advantageous to the disposition of this case, he is hereby authorized to call the undersigned, at Telephone Number (216) 861-5582.

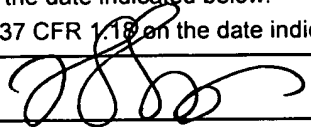
Respectfully submitted,

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September 26, 2006
Date



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Date: September <u>26</u> , 2006	Name: Theresa L. Lucas